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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MANAMA 001566

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ARPI

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TAGS: [MARR](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [BA](#)

SUBJECT: CROWN PRINCE TO CNO: BAHRAIN SCHOOL IS ASSET FOR REGION

REF: MANAMA 1553

Classified By: Ambassador William T. Monroe, Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

Summary

[11.](#) (C) Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Admiral Vernon Clark met with Crown Prince and Commander-in-Chief of the Bahrain Defense Force Sheikh Salman Bin Hamad Al Khalifa on October 10 and discussed the status of the Bahrain School, a review of U.S. naval presence in the region, terrorism and the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Crown Prince called the Bahrain School a tremendous asset and ambassador to the region. Clark acknowledged the school's importance and focused on the worldwide effort to restructure the Navy and review its "footprint" in the region. The Crown Prince urged the Navy to remain in the region, and praised its role ensuring regional stability. He confirmed Bahrain's commitment to combat terrorism but said a festering Arab-Israeli conflict would continue to draw new recruits. The Crown Prince also reaffirmed Bahrain's support for U.S. efforts in Iraq. End Summary.

Bahrain School: Your Best Ambassador

[12.](#) (C) CNO Admiral Vernon Clark opened the meeting with the Crown Prince and Commander-in-Chief of the Bahrain Defense Force Sheikh Salman Bin Hamad Al Khalifa on October 10 by noting he was pleased to see that joint U.S.-Bahraini efforts to keep the Bahrain School open had been successful. The Crown Prince called the Bahrain School your "best ambassador" and urged the Navy to ensure that this tremendous asset in the region remains open. CNO Clark reaffirmed the importance of the school and said the Navy wanted to be a good neighbor.

Reviewing the Navy Footprint

[13.](#) (C) Clark then explained that his trip was part of a worldwide review of the Navy's "footprint." The Navy is looking to streamline operations in response to budgetary constraints, security concerns and new emerging threats. He referred to an increased need for "near-shore" operations that would include new shallow-water vessels and closer cooperation between the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Coast Guard at home and overseas. The Crown Prince underscored the important role the U.S. Navy has played in bringing stability to the Gulf, ensuring other tools such as diplomacy and development programs to be more effective. He stressed that technical capabilities, while important, should not be the only thing the Navy looks at when considering how to be more efficient and effective in the Gulf.

Navy Critical to Winning Hearts and Minds

[14.](#) (C) Throughout the discussion, the Crown Prince focused on the need to build relationships with local communities and called upon the Navy to remain engaged in Bahrain. These kinds of efforts are critical to "winning hearts and minds" in the region. Partnerships such as the Bahrain School demonstrate how effective that kind of community involvement can be in creating a stable and secure future for all. Clark noted that he appreciated the Crown Prince's perspective and that this trip was part of an effort to engage partners in the region to determine a footprint that was reasonable for all.

Terrorism: Arab-Israeli Conflict an Open Sore

[15.](#) (C) Turning directly to terrorism the Crown Prince put Bahrain squarely on the front-line in a global war of ideas. He called for an effort to hit terrorists at their "center of gravity," the Arab-Israeli conflict. He added that this

continues to be a strong marketing tool, allowing the terrorists to attract new recruits. He said that without a resolution, efforts to root out extremism would continue to fail. The Crown Prince said reformers in the region must be able to demonstrate that the justice and democracy America calls for is not antithetical to an Arab definition of those same principles, but rather part of one set of common and universal principles.

Iraq

16. (C) On Iraq, the Crown Prince noted the King's comment to Secretary Rumsfeld (Reftel) that the ultimate responsibility

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for the security of Iraq rests with the Iraqis, not the U.S. He said that now was the time to remain focused and that Bahrain was willing to do its part to support U.S. efforts in Iraq.
MONROE